

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Oggi's Story



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Far Left:
Oggi learning photography as a young boy

Left:
Founder Presidents Mark and Caroline Cook survey the damage at the Bjelave institution in 1994

Below:
Oggi today, with a child from his documentary

Oggi first came into contact with us when he was living in the Bjelave institution in Sarajevo. He participated in our Young Adult Support Scheme, which prepared him for leaving the institution and living independently. Here, he tells us what it will mean to revolutionise the childcare system:

“The lives of these children will be transformed, as they will now know what it is like to feel loved. In an institution there’s no such thing as a family, and with so few staff you are treated as a big group of children, not even as an individual.

Before, these children would have been forced to leave the institution when they turned 18. With no one to care about them, nowhere to stay and no money, their future would have been very poor. But now they will have a family for the rest of their lives

and the chance of a normal life - something that was taken from us all when we were put in an institution.

There’s not a beautiful institution in the world. However nice they may look or however many toys they have, the best place for a child to be is in a family.” Institutional care denies children the opportunity to fulfil their potential. There is no better environment for a child to grow up in than that of a loving family; a value that underpins all that we do.”

The story continues...

Oggi is studying for a degree in Documentary Film and Television Making. He is currently working with us to create a film to help prepare children for life in family-based care. Children leaving institutions have lots to learn about their new lives and the world can seem like a scary place.

In the film, children and young adults from our projects in Central and Eastern Europe talk about how they felt about leaving the institutions they lived in and what their lives are like now. This will help allay any fears that children still living in institutions may have as they will be able to hear for themselves what to expect from their life-changing move.

